

Immunization regulation changes for 2018-19 school year

Registration open for tech competition



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**Commissioner's Comments: Student
input vital in education**

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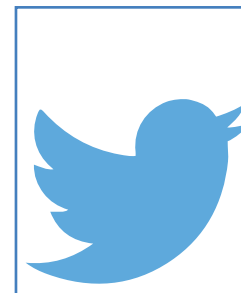
Nominations open for History Teacher of the Year



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Twitter chat

Parents: Want to chat with educators?
A parent/teacher Twitter chat takes
place at 9 p.m. every Wednesday.
To participate or just follow the
conversation, use the hashtag #PTchat.

Commissioner Stephen Pruitt: Student input vital in education

As Kentucky's commissioner of education, I spend a lot of time talking and listening to people from across the Commonwealth.

But one of the curious things in education is while we tend to seek input from educators, parents and community members when making policy decisions, we don't always seek input from those who are affected most by those decisions – the students. Thankfully that is not the case in Kentucky. Student input is valued at the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and throughout the state by schools, districts and education advocacy groups.

In October, I held my first meeting of this year's Commissioner's Student Advisory Council. The council is made up of 22 students from across the Commonwealth – from urban to rural communities, and the Kentucky School for the Blind and the Kentucky School for the Deaf – who represent Kentucky's more than 650,000 public school students. I enjoy every minute of my time with this group.

These students make me feel confident about the future of our state. They are thoughtful, well-spoken and eager to share their thoughts and opinions about how policies that are being considered in Frankfort will impact them and their peers in the classroom. The conversations I have with them lead to richer, deeper discussions among all of us here at KDE.

It's not just KDE that is seeking input from the Commonwealth's students. The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence has its own Student Voice Team, which is comprised of middle school through college students. Its members have spoken at statewide education summits, testified before Kentucky's Joint Legislative Education Committee and even helped draft legislation.

Students should have a place at the table on the

local level too. Many school districts have their own superintendent advisory committee made up of students, and some local school boards have a special non-voting student member.

These positions aren't just something nice for a student to post on their college applications. The students from whom I have sought input always take



Stephen Pruitt

our conversations seriously and provide a unique perspective that informs discussions in significant ways.

I think the new year is a great time for all of us to try making that deeper connection with young people, whether they are our students or our children.

Parents, having been the father of two teenagers, I understand that it's not always easy to get your children to talk in any depth about what's going on at their school. I know what it's like to ask your child what they learned in school that day, only to get a shrug and have them say, "nothing."

Keep making the effort. Keep asking questions about who your child's favorite teacher is, what they learned in social studies that day or what they're reading in English class. Keep making the effort to open up those lines of communication. You'll be glad you did.

Teachers, it's important for us to remember that education is not something that is done to a student. Education, at its best, is a partnership between teachers and their students. Engaged learners who take an active role in their education, who seek out ideas and information that challenges and excites them, are some of Kentucky's best and most-promising students.

And students, I'll be holding another series of town hall events across the state early this year to hear people's concerns and get their input on what kinds of changes we need to make to high school graduation requirements.

I invite you to come out and share your thoughts and ideas about what you need to be prepared for the next stage of your life, whether it's more education or entering the workforce. I'm eager to hear what you have to say.

Immunization regulation changes for 2018-19 school year

Get prepared for the 2018-19 school year now by getting newly required vaccinations and immunization certificates. Changes in state law have added new requirements for immunizations for the 2018-19 school year.

Under the [new regulations](#) from the [Kentucky Department for Public Health](#), students will be required to undergo Hepatitis A shots. Students 16 years and older also will be required to take a meningitis booster shot.

Starting on July 1 2018, two doses of hepatitis A (HepA) vaccine will be required for all children ages 19 months through 18 years who attend daycare, primary and secondary school. The doses must be given 6 months apart.

Children 2 years and older who have only had one dose will need to be

caught up before July.

Students 16 and older also must have the meningitis booster by the start of the 2018-19 school year.

There are also changes to the immunization forms; forms printed from the Kentucky Immunization Registry do not need a signature. A written sworn statement is required to obtain a religious exemption from required school-entry immunizations.

Homeschooled students and private school students must follow the new guidelines to participate in public school activities.

For more information, see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) from the Department for Public Health.

Nominations open for History Teacher of the Year

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is seeking nominations for the Kentucky History Teacher of the Year. State History Teachers of the Year receive \$1,000, an archive of materials for their school's library and an invitation to attend a 2019 Gilder Lehrman Teacher Seminar.

In addition to the state prize, state winners also become finalists for the national award. The national winner will receive a \$10,000 prize and attend a

ceremony in their honor in New York City. Jennifer Faith, a teacher at Eastside Middle School (Bullitt County), was the 2017 Kentucky History Teacher of the Year.

A list of [frequently asked questions](#) outlines who is eligible and the criteria for winning the award, among other information. Nominate someone for History Teacher of the Year using the [online nomination form](#). The deadline for 2018 nominations is March 31.

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Jennifer Faith, a teacher at Eastside Middle School (Bullitt County) was Gilder Lehrman's 2017 Kentucky History Teacher of the Year.

Junior Duck Stamp Contest entries now being accepted

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's [Junior Duck Stamp contest](#) is now open to students in grades K-12. The contest teaches students about wetlands, waterfowl, land stewardship, migratory birds, conservation, and appreciation of art and writing. The contest is a great learning experience for all types of talent, from beginners to the more experienced. Students may express their knowledge by drawing, painting or sketching a picture of an eligible North American waterfowl species.

Because students express themselves best in different formats, the conservation message contest gives students an opportunity to use the written word to express their knowledge. Students submit their artwork to the [Kentucky competition](#).

Entries must be postmarked by March 15. The judging takes place in mid-March, with more than 600 prizes (certificates, t-shirts, plaques, money, ribbons, etc.). The best of show goes on to represent Kentucky in the national contest. National prizes are 1st Place: \$1,000, 2nd Place: \$500, 3rd Place: \$200 and Conservation Message First Place: \$200.

For more information contact Moria Painter, environmental education specialist at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, at (270) 343-3797.



William Seay, 14, of Paducah was Kentucky's 2017 winner with his colored pencil drawing. Seay's picture was named to the top 25 in the national contest. Photo provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Kentucky Teacher Awards nominations open

The Kentucky Department of Education and [Valvoline Inc.](#), sponsors of the Kentucky Teacher Awards, have opened the nomination process for the 2019 awards.

Nominations may be submitted electronically at [kentuckytoy.com](#) and are due by Feb. 15. Any full-time public school teacher in the state with at least three years of experience is eligible. Teachers may be nominated by students, parents, teaching peers, principals, superintendents or anyone from the community who has an interest in honoring an outstanding educator.

All nominated teachers are required to complete a formal application, which must be submitted by March 1. Judging will take place in March by a blue ribbon panel of education professionals from around the state. As many as 24 Valvoline Teacher Achievement Award winners will be announced in the spring.

Following site visits with nine semifinalists in April and personal interviews with the top three candidates, the Kentucky Teacher of the Year will be announced in Frankfort. At that time, all 24 teachers will be honored with cash awards and other mementos. Teacher Achievement Award winners will receive a cash gift of \$500; two of the three finalists will receive a cash gift of \$3,000; and the Teacher of the Year will receive a cash prize of \$10,000, along with an exciting ambassadorship opportunity. The Kentucky Teacher of the Year will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

Now in its 18th year, the Kentucky Teacher Awards program is an innovative collaboration between private industry and public education.



(From left) Belinda Raye Furman, the 2018 Kentucky Elementary School Teacher of the Year from Sherman Elementary (Grant County); Kellie Clark, the 2018 Kentucky Teacher of the Year from Randall K. Cooper High School (Boone County); Jennifer Meo-Sexton, the 2018 Kentucky Middle School Teacher of the Year from Bondurant Middle School (Franklin County) and Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt pose for a photo after the Kentucky Teacher of the Year Ceremony in the Capitol rotunda in Frankfort.

Photo by Bobby Ellis, May 16, 2017

Registration open for tech competition

Registration is now open for the [2018 Spellman High Voltage Electronics Clean Tech Competition](#). This international research and design challenge is open to 15-18 year old pre-university students. Each year, the competition encourages scientific understanding of real-world issues and the integration of environmentally responsible energy sources.

The 2018 challenge, “[Solving Climate Change](#),” asks students to develop a clean technology solution to the many problems associate with climate change. Teams consist of 1-3 students and are assisted by a team leader (i.e. parent, teacher or mentor) to develop a written proposal. There is no limit to the number of teams per school and there is no entry fee.

[Online registration](#) is open. First round [paper submissions](#) are due April 20.

Ten finalist teams will be selected, given a \$200 stipend and matched with a mentor to help them prepare a [prototype presentation](#) for the finalist event. Finalists compete at Stony Brook University in New York on July 13 for the \$10,000 grand [prize](#) and continued mentorship. See the [2018 competition flyer](#).





Avoid these common student financial aid mistakes

Many students spend more for college than they should by making some common mistakes when seeking financial aid. Follow these tips from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) to make sure you get the help you need.

Some people don't bother to apply for financial aid because they don't think they'll qualify. All students are encouraged to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to find out if they're eligible for state and federal student aid programs. Not filing may hurt a student's chances of getting more free money for college.

Another common mistake is waiting until the last minute to apply for financial aid. Some programs have deadlines, while others have limited funds. Students and families should submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1 of each year.

Colleges send each student who has applied for student aid a financial aid package. Students and their families should look it over carefully. They should compare offers if they have received offers from more than one school to see which one is the best deal. Of course, students should also consider other factors, such as whether a school offers the academic program a student wants or if it meets other expectations.

Students who need loans to help pay for college must be good consumers. They should apply for federal student loans before applying for private loans. Not all private lenders offer the same rates and benefits. Borrowers should pay close attention to what lenders call the back-end benefits: the interest rate and principal reductions offered when repaying the loan.

KHEAA is the state agency that administers Kentucky's student financial aid programs, including the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES). Its sister agency, the Kentucky Higher Education Student Loan Corporation (KHESLC), offers Advantage Loans to help students and parents pay for college or to refinance student loans. For more information about Advantage Loans, visit www.advantageeducationloan.com.

For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants, visit www.kheaa.com; write KHEAA, P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602; or call (800) 928-8926, ext. 6-7214.

Here's how to get in trouble with credit card debt

Students can get into trouble with credit card debt if they don't take time to think about what they're doing, according to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA).

One quick way to get into trouble is to carry a high balance and pay only the minimum payment each month.

If you have a \$1,500 balance, your minimum payment might be \$30 a month, since many credit card companies set the minimum payment at 2 percent of the balance. Let's say your card carries a 22 percent interest rate. If you only pay \$30 a month and don't charge anything else until you pay off the entire balance, it will take you more than 11 years to pay your balance down to zero — and you'll pay \$2,600 in interest.

It's worse, of course, if you pay the \$30 and turn around and charge another \$30.

That circle is especially bad for students. Many college officials say more students drop out because they have to go to work to pay off their credit cards than because they flunk out.

Before using your credit card, ask yourself if you really need what you're buying and if you can afford it. And if you can't pay off the entire balance, pay as much as you can, not just the minimum.

KHEAA is the state agency that administers Kentucky's grant and scholarship programs, including the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES). The agency also provides financial literacy videos at <http://itsmoney.kheaa.com> and free copies of "It's Money, Baby," a guide to financial literacy, to Kentucky schools and residents upon request at publications@kheaa.com.

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